

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 NEA-11 ISO-00 CAB-05 CIAE-00 COME-00
DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 SS-15
NSC-05 PA-02 /060 W
-----055407 200638Z /10

R 170535Z MAY 78 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6166
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
USLO RIYADH
AMEMBASSY ROME

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ROME FOR RCAA

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAIR XF US
SUBJECT: JOINT ARAB AIR CONCORDE SERVICE TO U.S.

1. REPRESENTATIVES OF A NUMBER OF ARAB AIRLINES ARE
MEETING IN BAHRAIN MAY 16 TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE JOINT ARAB
OPERATION OF A CONCORDE SERVICE FROM THE MIDDLE EAST TO
NEW YORK. THE PRESS REPORTED EARLY THINKING AS A ROUTE FROM
BEIRUT, WITH CAIRO AS POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE, VIA
TOULOUSE TO NEW YORK. THIS WOULD PERMIT MAXIMUM FLIGHT
OVER WATER TO UNILIZE THE SUPERSONIC SPEED OF THE
CONCORDE. THE SAME PRESS ARTUKECSAJEPORT GREAT SUCCESS FOR
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THE LONDON TO U.S. CONCORDE SERVICES WHICH THE ARTICLES
CLAIM ARE AVERAGING 85-90 PERCENT OF CAPACITY.

2. CONTACTS WITHIN GULF AIR CONFIRMED THAT THE MEETING
IS TAKING PLACE TO DISCUSS CONCORDE SERVICE TO THE U.S.
THEY STATED THAT PRESSURES ARE GREAT FROM THE FOUR GOVERNMENTS
WHICH OWN GULF AIR TO ESTABLISH SERVICE TO THE U.S.

BUT THAT THE ECONOMICS WOULD NOT PERMIT GULF AIR TO GO IT ALONE. OTHER ARAB AIRLINES ARE UNDER SIMILAR PRESSURES AND ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS. THE IDEA OF USING THE CONCORDE CAME FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF MEA AND HENCE THE SUGGESTION OF BEIRUT AS ARAB TERMINUS. GIVEN THESE PRESSURES THOSE IN GULF AIR WITH WHOM WE HAVE TALKED HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO PREDICT THE PROBABLE OUTCOME OF THE MEETING HERE OR EVEN THE POSITION THAT GULFAIR ITSELF MIGHT TAKE. IT IS BELIEVED THAT ROYAL JORDANIAN AND SYRIAN AIRLINES MIGHT RESIST AS THEY HAVE JOINT SERVICE TO THE U.S. AND THAT SAUDIA MIGHT PREFER TO DEVELOP U.S. SERVICE ON ITS OWN.

3. ONE WESTERN SALES REP WHO IS PASSING THROUGH BAHRAIN STATED THAT A VARIATION IN ROUTING HAS BEEN PROPOSED TO INCREASE THE ARAB CHARACTER OF THE SERVICE AND THE FERTILIZER FLIGHT TIME. THIS VARIATION WOULD HAVE THE FLIGHT ORIGINATING AT THIS END FROM BEIRUT, CAIRO, AMMAN, DAMASCUS AND POSSIBLY ANOTHER ARAB CITY ON DIFFERENT DAYS OF THE WEEK AND LANDING IN CASABLANCA ENROUTE TO NEW YORK.

4. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH CONSIDERATION OF ARAB CONCORDE SERVICE TO THE U.S., BRITISH AIRWAYS ANNOUNCED THAT IT IS DISCONTINUING THE SUPPLEMENTARY FLIGHT OF THE CONCORDE WHICH PASSES THROUGH BAHRAIN
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FROM SINGAPORE TO LONDON DUE TO INSUFFICIENT USE. BA REPORTEDLY AT ALSO TYING IN THE FLIGHTS FROM HERE WITH THOSE DEPARTING LONDON FOR NEW YORK. ACCORDING TO PUBLICITY RELEASES THIS WILL PERMIT TRAVELLERS TO HAVE A LATE BREAKFAST IN BAHRAIN AND DINNER IN NEW YORK. THE CONCORDE WILL DEPART BAHRAIN SHORTLY BEFORE 1000 HOURS LOCAL AND THE CONNECTING FLIGHT WOULD ARRIVE IN NEW YORK SHORTLY AFTER 1800 HOURS LOCAL.
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